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THE OPEN COURT.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE

VOLUME X

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THE CENTENARY OF PAINE'S "AGE OF REASON."

BY MONCURE D. CONWAY.

IN the opening year 1793, when revolutionary France had beheaded its king, its wrath next turned upon the King of kings, by whose grace every despot claimed to reign. But eventualities had brought among them a great Quaker heart—Thomas Paine. He had pleaded with the revolutionists for the king's life, thereby incurring the stroke of their bloodshot eye. And when the king was slain, he set himself to deal with their rising fury against the King of kings. His entreaty for Louis XVI. had been "Kill the king, but spare the man," and now he pleaded, "Disbelieve in the King of kings, but do not confuse with that idol the all loving Heart of the universe." To Paine Atheism appeared the overthrow of a universal Fatherhood on which rested universal Brotherhood. On this theme he had written from time to time during many years, and immediately after the execution of the king (January 21, 1793) he gathered up his materials and gave them to a fellow-deputy, Lanthenas, to translate into French. This earliest *Age of Reason* was printed in French in March, 1793, about the time when the priesthood was finally overthrown in France. It was just at the high tide of insurrection against the entire Past, but the worst element of the Past was still so active that a man was as likely to lose his life for a theoretical variation in his anti-theological doctrine as formerly for a slip in Athanasian metaphysics. Lanthenas at once submitted his translation of the *Age of Reason* to the powerful Robespierrian, Couthon, who was offended by it, possibly because Paine had a fling at the "Goddess of Nature." The orthodox who have denounced the *Age of Reason* are in succession to Couthon, as cruel a murderer as ever lived. Couthon's frown suppressed the book, and Paine states that his life was endangered. "I endangered my life in the first place by opposing in the Convention the executing of the king, . . . and endangered it a second time by opposing atheism."

But Paine did not accept Couthon's verdict on his book. He got back his manuscripts, and waited for a calmer moment when he could prepare a more perfect book. The Terror, however, waxed in fury. On October 31, 1793, the Girondins were executed, and

their American comrade, Paine, was warned that he would soon share their fate. Thereupon he set himself to gather in some literary form his manuscripts on religion, and worked on them until the night after Christmas. He had not completed it six hours when, at three in the morning, he was arrested in his house, No. 63 Faubourg St. Denis. On his way to prison he managed to deposit his *Age of Reason* with Joel Barlow. It was printed by Barrois at the English Press in Paris, and at once published in London, Philadelphia, and New York.

Ten long months Paine was thus immured, hearing nothing of his book, or of the controversy it had excited. His old friend James Monroe, afterwards President, having arrived as Minister in Paris, secured Paine's release, November 4, 1794. He found Paine more dead than alive, from cold and semi-starvation, which had brought on a terrible abscess in his side. Mr. and Mrs. Monroe took him to their own house, and tenderly nursed him, but there was little prospect that he could recover. The abscess continued the cruelty of his gaolers; though in the house of kindness, he was still a prisoner, facing death. The invalid then first read the replies to his *Age of Reason*, and in Monroe's house he wrote the really epoch-making work—Part Second of the *Age of Reason*. This first appeared in London on October 24, 1795, a fact that recalls Milton's saying that when God has any new revelation to make he first reveals it to "His Englishmen." But Providence seems to employ doubtful agents. While Paine was carrying his book through the English Press in Paris, some rogue stole some unrevised proofs, and copied parts of his manuscript, and disposed of these to a London publisher, W. D. Symonds. On seeing the advertisement Paine wrote to a London printer:

"Sir,—I have seen advertised in the London papers the second edition [part] of the *Age of Reason*, printed, the advertisement says, from the Author's Manuscript, and entered at Stationers Hall. I have never sent any manuscript to any person. It is therefore a forgery to say it is printed from the author's Manuscript; and I suppose is done to give the Publisher a pretence of Copy Right, which he has no title to.

"I send you a printed copy, which is the only one I have sent to London. I wish you to make a cheap edition of it. I know not by what means any copy has got over to London. If any person has made a manuscript copy I can have no doubt but it is full of errors. I wish you would talk to Mr. [? Symonds] upon this subject, as I wish to know by what means this trick has been played, and from whom the publisher has got possession of any copy.

"PARIS, December 4, 1795. T. PAINE."

The cheap edition (one shilling) appeared, January 1, 1796, published by D. I. Eaton, who described himself as "printer to the supreme majesty of the People." Poor Paine had fewest of those "Rights of Man" which he proclaimed. His iron bridge patent was disregarded after his outlawry for the *Rights of Man* (1792) by the bridge across the Wear (while he was in prison in Paris, and was unable to make any reclamation of his stolen literary property). Symonds's edition distributed its errors through England and America. Fortunately few of the clerical errors affect the sense. The worst are in the Preface, where instead of "1793" the misleading date "1790" is given as the year at whose close Paine completed Part First, —an error that spread far and wide, and was fastened on by his calumniator in America (Cheetham) to prove Paine's inconsistency. In the same Preface occurs this sentence: "The intolerant spirit of religious persecution had transferred itself into politics; the tribunals, styled Revolutionary, supplied the place of the Inquisition; and the Guillotine of the State outdid the Fire and Faggot of the Church." The rogue who copied this little knew the care with which Paine weighed words, and that he would never call persecution "religious," nor connect the guillotine with the "State," nor concede that with all its horrors it had outdone the history of fire and faggot. What Paine wrote was: "The intolerant spirit of church persecution had transferred itself into politics; the tribunals, styled Revolutionary, supplied the place of an Inquisition; and the Guillotine of the Stake."

Since the publication of my *Life of Paine* I have made an interesting discovery concerning the *Age of Reason*, which I have not yet published. I stated in that biography that although the work as we now have it was written in the last months of 1793, and finished within six hours of his arrest (December 27), he had written in the beginning of the year a work of the same title, which was translated into French by Lanthenas, but suppressed because it gave offence to Couthon. I have sought in vain, in the National Library at Paris and elsewhere, for this early translation; but it struck me lately that the translation by Lanthenas dated 1794, *Le Siècle de la Raison*, might be simply his original translation with a new title-page. This

led me to compare the latter with the English work, with the result that my guess is fully corroborated. Several of Paine's paragraphs, footnotes, and sentences are unknown to Lanthenas; and on the other hand in the hurry of writing at the close of the year, with the guillotine blade suspended over him, Paine omitted several sentences and clauses which his readers will be glad to find recovered in my forthcoming edition. I may say for those not familiar with Lanthenas's translations that he was too much of a literalist to interpolate anything. I will now give several of the more interesting restorations which I have been able to make by the help of Lanthenas's French translation, placing in brackets the altered or additional words:

"Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses, the Christians their Jesus Christ . . . the Turks their Mahomet; [as if it were not of the very essence of the ways of God to be equally open to all men]."

"As to the theology that is now studied it is the study of human opinions and of human fancies concerning [the Supreme Intelligence]. . . . It is not the least of the mischiefs that the Christian system has done to the world that it has abandoned the original and beautiful system of [natural] theology, like a beautiful innocent, to distress and reproach, for the hag superstition."

"The solitary idea of a solitary world, rolling or at rest in the immense ocean of space, gives place to the cheerful idea of a society of worlds [whose very movement is the first awakening and first instruction of reason in man]."

"Every principal art has science for its parent, though the person who mechanically performs the work does not always, and indeed but very seldom, perceive the connexion; [and although owing to the ignorance which modern governments have diffused, it may to-day be very rare that such persons even give a thought to such things]."

"He (Jesus) preached most excellent morality, and the equality of man; but he preached also against the corruptions and avarice of the Jewish priests. . . . The accusation which those priests brought against him was that of sedition and conspiracy against the Roman government, . . . neither is it [impossible] that Jesus Christ had in contemplation the delivery of the Jewish nation from the bondage of the Romans. Between the two, however, [was taken the life of this virtuous reformer and revolutionist, too little imitated, too much forgotten, too much misunderstood]."

Perhaps Couthon was angered by these last words of Paine's tribute to Jesus,—"trop peu imité, trop

oublié, trop méconnu." No equal tribute to the human Jesus can be found in any orthodox, theological, or religious English or American book of the last century.

It was considered a sort of sin to "know Christ after the flesh." Early in the last century Dean Swift remarked that considering that their religion was based on the union of divinity and humanity, it was wonderful how little of either there was in it. Of thought there was little in the pulpit till Paine's book waked it up. In looking over old files of the London *Morning Chronicle* I observed along with the first advertisements of the *Age of Reason* an advertisement to the clergy that G. Kearsley, 46 Fleet Street, had for sale a good stock of manuscript sermons in a "legible hand."

Before leaving the French translation I may mention that, unlike our English version, it is divided into chapters, whose headings I translate: "The Author's Profession of Faith"; "Of Missions and Revelations"; "Concerning the Character of Jesus Christ, and His History"; "Of the Bases of Christianity"; "Examination in Detail of the Preceding Bases"; "Of the True Theology"; "Examination of the Old Testament"; "In What the True Revelation Consists"; "Concerning God, and the Lights Cast on His Existence by the Old Testament"; "The Effects of Christianity on Education, with Proposed Reforms"; "Comparison of Christianity with the Religious Ideas Inspired by Nature"; "Advantages of the Existence of Many Worlds in each Solar System"; "Application of the Premises to the System of the Christians"; "Of the Means Employed in all Time, and Almost Universally, to Deceive the People"; "Recapitulation."

The English version contains, however, several paragraphs and sentences not in the French book. Instead of Addison's version of the 19th Psalm, "The spacious firmament, etc.," Lanthenas has substituted a poetical version of the same Psalm by Jean Baptiste Rousseau.

* * *

Among the large number of replies to Paine's *Age of Reason*,—thirty-six works are catalogued in the British Museum, but there are many it does not possess,—not one, so far as I have observed, has noted a very remarkable omission in Part I. So eager and hungry were the theologians to get at the heretic that they appear to have passed by a statement of the scientist, which they might plausibly have fixed on as a proof of ignorance. In Paine's astronomic episode, wherein he anticipates Herschel's theory of the fixed stars, he nevertheless entirely ignores Herschel's discovery of a seventh planet. In Paine's enumeration of the planets, they are still six, and the names are

given. When the book was published, Uranus had been more than twelve years discovered. Astronomy was Paine's favorite science; he had studied it under Ferguson; and it is not for a moment to be supposed that he had not joined in the universal applause of Herschel's discovery. The omission of any reference to the new planet plainly shows that the astronomic parts of the *Age of Reason* (Part I.) were printed from manuscripts written before the year 1781. Had it been possible for the prisoner to revise his proofs, the omission would no doubt have been corrected, but it is now an *erratum* that adds meaning to his prefatory words: "It had long been my intention to publish my thoughts upon religion, but I had originally reserved it to a later period of life, intending it to be the last work I should undertake." The omission of Uranus is a witness that Paine had been working out his religion during the American Revolution, just as he had been working out steam-navigation,—a practicable method of which he had invented years before the first steamer was launched by Fitch, who attests Paine's precedence.

Paine's theism is indeed traceable to a period long anterior to the American War. Had it been generally realised that his mind was not sceptical, but eminently constructive, historians might have found in his remarks concerning the Quakers, in the earlier part of the last century, among whom he was educated, very instructive testimony as to their views, which were much the same as those of the American "Hicksites." A remarkable confirmation of Paine's witness concerning the early Quakers has recently come from an unexpected quarter—Russia. A sect there, "the Dukhobortsy," is in collision with the government, and Tolstoi has sent to the London *Times* (October 23) an account of the sect, which sprang up in the last century:

"The first seeds of the teaching called 'Dukhoborcheskaya' were sown by a foreigner, a Quaker, who came to Russia. The fundamental idea of his Quaker teaching was that in the soul of man dwells God himself, and that He himself guides men by His inner word. God lives in nature physically and in man's soul spiritually. To Christ, as to an historical personage, the Dukhobortsy do not ascribe great importance. . . . Christ was God's son, but only in the sense in which we call ourselves 'sons of God.' The purpose of Christ's sufferings was no other than to show us an example of suffering for truth. The Quakers, who in 1818 visited the Dukhobortsy, could not agree with them upon these religious subjects; and when they heard from them their opinion about Jesus Christ (that he was a man) exclaimed, 'Darkness!'. . . 'From the Old and New Testaments,' they say, 'we take only what is useful,' mostly the moral teaching. . . . The

moral ideas of the Dukhobortsy are the following: All men are, by nature, equal; external distinctions, whatever they may be, are worth nothing. . . . Amongst themselves they hold subordination, and much more, a monarchical government, to be contrary to their ideas."

Here is an early Hicksite Quakerism carried, apparently from England, to Russia long before the birth of Elias Hicks, who recovered it from Paine, to whom the American Quakers refused burial. Although Paine arraigned the union of Church and State, the principle of that union was based on a conception of equality based on the divine sonship of every man. This faith underlay equally his burden against claims to divine partiality by a "chosen people," a priesthood, a "monarch by the grace of God," or an aristocracy. Paine's "reason" is only an expansion of the Quaker's "inner light"; and the greater impression, compared with previous republican and deistic writings, made by his *Rights of Man* and *Age of Reason* (really volumes of one work) on the century that has followed, can only be explained by the apostolic fervor which makes him a spiritual successor of such men as George Fox and John Wesley.

The evidence afforded by Paine's omission of Uranus among the planets that a large portion of Part I. was written in early life, led me to compare it closely with Part II. There are indications of much progress. The deism of Part I. is substantially Newtonian, though invested with a fervor unknown to the earlier deism. God is the Supreme Intelligence; he is displayed in the visible universe; and his highest gift to man is reason,—by which, as Kepler said, man thinks God's thoughts after Him. But in the second part, the whole written in 1795, theism rests on a new basis. He finds God revealed "in the works of the creation, and by that repugnance we feel in ourselves to bad actions, and disposition to do good ones."

It is interesting to compare with this Kant's famous aphorism: "Two things fill my spirit with ever new and increasing wonder and reverence the more often and fixedly thought contemplates them,—the starry heavens above me and moral law within me." The *Critique of the Practical Reason*, in which Kant's sentence appears, was printed in 1788, seven years before the sentence of Paine. But Kant was an unknown and untranslated man when Paine wrote, and it is an impressive fact that to these two devout men, in the solitude, the ethical basis of theism was almost simultaneously reflected in the universal order.

In Paine this new theism marks the turning point of freethought from the old *a priori* method of earlier deism. Edmund Randolph, first Attorney-General of the United States, ascribed the tremendous impression made by Paine's pamphlets during the American

Revolution, to his unexampled power of carrying with him both educated and uneducated. His *Age of Reason*, which he insisted on bringing out in a cheap form, was taken very seriously by the most learned men of his time, Priestly, Wakefield, Watson (Bishop of Llandaff), etc. But its cheapness, leading to a vast circulation, brought on its prosecution: it was made the flag under which a thirty years' war for freedom of the press was fought by humble people; and although these won the victory, and the book could not be suppressed among them, it was in a sense suppressed among scholars,—scholarship being a sort of aristocratic privilege. This is why we now find such writers as Lecky, Leslie Stephen, and Huxley ignoring Paine. There is still an impression that he was merely a very able but rather ignorant member of the working class. Paine was, on the contrary, a learned man. He studied astronomy with Ferguson, mathematics with Martin, physics with Bevis and Franklin; he was a founder of the Philosophical Society in Philadelphia; and the University of Pennsylvania, under influence of the ablest scholars in America, conferred on him the degree of Master of Arts.

The memory of Huxley is dear to me, but it is impossible to pass by his casual comment on the eighteenth century freethinkers that "there is rarely much to be said for their work as an example of a grave investigation," and that they shared with their adversaries "to the full the fatal weakness of *a priori* philosophising." Huxley does not name or mean Paine, of whom he plainly knew nothing. Had he read the *Age of Reason* he would have realised that it was Paine who turned from the *a priori* method and really founded the Huxleyan school. He took up the late Professor's method; he refused to say that a miracle is impossible; he went through the Bible and judged each alleged miracle critically on its own merits, to an extent sufficient to estimate the value of the books. Huxley has unconsciously repeated Paine's rules of evidence, his arguments concerning the resurrection of Christ, and other points. In the *Age of Reason* may also be found the theory of a "Christian Mythology" afterwards worked out by Bauer and Strauss, and the first attempt to recover a human Jesus after the method of Renan.

It was indeed this inauguration of the critical and historical method which caused all the warfare over Paine's book. The clergy were compelled to go into the contradictions of the Bible, and make such concessions as to the additions, interpolations, and accidents that had befallen the book said to be written by the Holy Ghost, that infallibility was punctured, and the *Age of Reason* let in to decide what was and what was not the word of God. It was these concessions which inaugurated the Broad Church. That ration-

alistic wing, as well as Hicksite Quakerism, are monuments of Paine's *Age of Reason*. Prosecutions began soon after its publication, and many poor booksellers were imprisoned for years, and their families ruined. And during all that time the only pulpit from which a protest was uttered was that which the present writer has the honor to occupy,—South Place Chapel. The brave preacher was William Johnston Fox, then (1819) a believer in supernatural Christianity. But now his humble successor lives to witness not only a Paine Exhibition such as we are preparing at South Place, but such a celebration of this centenary as that of the conservative leader in the House of Commons (Balfour) who has declared in his *Foundations of Belief* (along with many superficial things) that Christian believers in "inspiration" have no right to deny the same to the great Oriental teachers. The Centenary was also celebrated, to the very month, in the Church Congress at Norwich, October 10, when Professor Bonney, F. R. S., Canon of Manchester, read a paper in which he said:

"I cannot deny that the increase of scientific knowledge has deprived parts of the earlier books of the Bible of the historical value which was generally attributed to them by our forefathers. The story of creation in the Book of Genesis, unless we play fast and loose either with words or with science, cannot be brought into harmony with what we have learnt from geology. Its ethnological statements are imperfect, if not sometimes inaccurate. The stories of the Fall, of the Flood, and of the Tower of Babel, are incredible in their present form. Some historical element may underlie many of the traditions in the first eleven chapters of that book, but this we cannot hope to recover. . . . The Gospels are not, so far as we know, strictly contemporaneous records, so we must admit the possibilities of variations and even inaccuracies in details being introduced by oral tradition."

This was said to an exceptionally conservative congress of the English Church. Every statement in it is in Paine's *Age of Reason*, and that the Canon was not taken to prison for publishing Paine's book, may be ascribed to the political and religious leaven mingled by Paine with the constitutional and theological meal of this nation, and its steady working through a hundred years.

Fanatics portrayed Paine as dying in agonies of remorse for writing the *Age of Reason*; but every sentence in it which excited their wrath was written in the presence of hourly expected death. It was Paine's solemn bequest to mankind, for whose welfare his life was a martyrdom. The world can never have another Paine. History does not repeat its apostles. They sum up a past, but the spirit they individually derive from it is an evolutionary force, and develops a larger

life in which their own testimony is absorbed. Should another religious apostle arise he (or she) will be far removed from Paine's gospel in form, but deep within that leader will be the transmitted blood and passion which wrote the most religious book written in the last century—*The Age of Reason*.

THE MONISM OF AUTOCOSM.

(Posthumous Article.)

BY THE LATE ROBERT LEWINS, M. D.

Corpus sanum = Mens sana.

PERMIT me to attempt a plain going exposition of the above named system of monistic materialism in the pages of *The Open Court*—an organ of public opinion, which, spite of our radical difference on this vital point, I regard as almost unique in its candor and zeal for truth. I regretfully say *radical* difference as our objective is so divergent; mine being to eradicate religion altogether from the blinded minds of vain man, as he has hitherto provisionally postured on earth—that of *The Open Court*, and I presume *The Monist*, though not so conspicuously posted up in the latter, to bolster up what I must from my scientific and neological, up to date platform term this hereditary disease—Goethe's *ewige Krankheit*—by these agencies, which to me, as to Napoleon on the occasion of the *Concordat*, seems what vaccination is to *Variola*. For the stamping out of bovine pleuro-pneumonia there seems no remedy but the slaughter of the infected victims. But for what I must call the dire contagion of religion—of the adoration of a Supreme Omnipotence, manifesting Himself as the "Author of Nature," with all its cruelties and *designed* torture chambers which, as Epictetus *inter alios* states, surpass all those of the most malignant earthly tyrants—science and reason provide a less drastic remedy. I say *designed* tortures, since the whole system of sentient existence, as we can now see more clearly than any former generation of the sons of men from our recent more comprehensive grasp of Nature's imperfections in the domain of biology, seems to show that the watchword of the latter is not only "Devil take the hindmost" but "Devil take all but the foremost," which is the real interpretation of the leading principle—the "survival of the fittest"—in modern, to say nothing of ancient, evolutionary natural science.

Alfonso the Wise of Castile is credited with saying that, if the Ptolemaic astronomy was correct, he himself could have given "God Almighty" hints which would have manifestly been for the better. But of animated nature this reproach still stands intact. Indeed, in my youth, I have often heard reflecting clinicians, not particularly gifted with thinking-power, echoing, quite as a matter of fact, the arraignment of the "wise," but practically unsuccessful Spanish

ruler, who like that "wonder of the world," the Emperor Frederick of Germany, patron, if not author, of the irreligious work *De Tribus Impostoribus*, if such a work exists, viz., Moses, Christ, and Mohammed, was not distinguished, but the reverse, for wise or prudent policy in practical public affairs. And how simple and apodictic the panacea for this inverted and perverted rule of life! Banish from theory and practice the arrogant claim of what Balzac terms *la recherche de l'Absolu*, fall back, or rather forward, on relativism, and the Sphinx-enigma is solved. Each man who does this, i. e., realises the "*volte face*," is "converted" from a Darius into an Œdipus, and to him the "painful riddle of the universe" is no longer a mystery. He then sees that behind or under *every* larva or mask only his own features are present. "*Gefühl ist Alles*," as even Dr. Johnson allowed of free will when he said: "We feel we are free and that's enough"—not that we do so feel when out of gear (health). Then we feel bound, like Prometheus, to the iron pillars of necessity, but that only connotes the fact that perfect corporeal sanity, including of course that of the *sensorium*, and not the glorification of an "if existent," unreachable God, or nature, is man's "chief end," or be all and end all. Hygiene, i. e., supreme culture of mind and body, becomes thus the surrogate of provisional and obsolete religion.

The Calvinist poet, Cowper, holds that the "un-devout astronomer is mad." La Place, and his French colleagues in ideal physics, were of exactly the opposite opinion, as the former great geometer curtly expressed to Napoleon by the formula: "I have no need of that [viz., a divine] supposition." This view does for physiology what La Place did for astronomy, what Lavoisier did for chemistry by his antiphlogistic theory, which first constituted a quantitative science and fully changed it from alchemy. What animistic dualism terms the "soul," which is only Anglo-Saxon for life—as *pneuma*, *psyche*, and ghost is for gas—represents in physiology what phlogiston does in chemistry—a mischievous heresy to which no one in past ages clung more childishly than Dr. Priestly himself, the discoverer of oxygen gas, named by him *dephlogisticated air*, opposing thus the antiphlogistic theory of combustion and calcination, which, as above stated, changed alchemy into chemistry with results which were so brilliant and immediate. A like effect would be sure to follow the abolition of God, the "soul," or "spirit" in the domain of biology. Then reason, the judge even of revelation, as Bishop Butler states, would have free verge and play with results I feel language too weak to express as regards their benignant action on our as yet derelict race.

Civilisation is but spurious, and social and political institutions unstable, while society and authority,

as amply demonstrated by history, and never more than in our own *fin de siècle* age, persist in efete mental anachronisms.

Make self God, or *vice versa*, and the day and all days are *our own*. We lose nothing, and gain everything, by the exchange. As immortality, like every thing and every nothing else, is only a *feeling*, infinity becomes even a more vivid sensual reality than before. The "rising from the dead," which, I presume, even Dr. Carus holds to be the most grotesque of nightmares, is of course impossible. But the sense of it, which is its true essence, still continues to exist in every pulse-beat; time and eternity, space and immensity, being one and the same. Between them no real solution of continuity is logically conceivable.

IDENTITY IN CHANGE.

In Reply to Mrs. Hopper's Question, Can There Be a New Christianity?

THIS world of ours is a world of changes, but the transformation that is taking place proceeds by degrees, and we are sometimes at a loss to know whether or not we can retain the same name for a thing that has become radically new.

The character of a man may change, and yet he retains the consciousness of his identity, and is regarded as the same person. The change of personalities rarely, if ever, implies a change of name. The same is true of ideas, of philosophies, of moral aspirations, of religions.

Thus, Platonism finds its expression in the books of Plato. Nevertheless, we had, when new problems arose, a new formulation of Platonism which is commonly called Neo-Platonism; and as to the Platonism of Plato, he may have changed his views after writing his Dialogues. We know that he burned all the books which he had written before he had become acquainted with the philosophy of Socrates. Thus Plato destroyed the old Platonism and replaced it by a Platonic Socratism.

Kant's writings show traces of his mental evolution, and Professor Windelband of Strassburg, one of the best-known Kant-investigators, distinguishes four phases of Kantism in which we find a decided change of front. Who, then, is the real Kant in Kant's own books, and what is genuine Kantism?

After Kant's death his criticism soon gave way to Hegelianism, officially protected as a kind of Prussian State-philosophy; but when the natural sciences overthrew the card houses of the various *a priori* constructionists, German philosophers resumed the study of Kant, and created a movement which is commonly called the Neo-Kantian school. Neo-Kantianism, however, is no longer pure Kantism: it is a new phase

of Kantism, which Kant himself would have been obliged to adopt on finding changed conditions and new requirements.

The Darwinian theory was formulated by Darwin, but when after Darwin's death new issues arose, Darwinism was restated, and we now distinguish between the Darwinism of Darwin and the Neo-Darwinism of some of his followers.

The Mohammedanism of to-day is different from that taught by Mohammed, and the Christianity of to-day is even more different from the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Nevertheless, both retain their names, as much as a learned professor, with all his titles and honorary degrees, retains the name which, as a tiny baby, he received from his parents soon after his birth.

By Christianity we understand, not so much the doctrines of Jesus Christ, as the whole movement that was created through the aspirations of his life.

Christ's Christianity consisted in his devoting himself entirely to the mission of preaching that the kingdom of heaven was near at hand; and the kingdom of heaven, according to his utterances preserved in the synoptic gospels, was a kind of communistic society, the members of which gave up all self-assertion and surrendered their property, together with worldly pursuits, leading a life of perfect chastity and self-abnegation. The first Christian congregation at Jerusalem preserved these traits of Christ's ethics, but when Christianity was transferred to Greece, the ideal of brotherly love was retained, while the socialistic principles, which were found to be impracticable, were abandoned, and the spirit only of Christ's movement was retained. With every new conquest Christianity developed new features and entered upon a new phase of its evolution. Thus, the development of Christianity among various and widely distant nations involved a differentiation leading to schisms. Roman Christianity differed considerably from Greek Christianity, and still more from the religion of the Christian Copts and Abyssinians.

When Christianity spread over the North of Europe, it became Teutonised, and the Christianity of our churches contains more ingredients from our Saxon ancestors than most Christians of to-day are aware of.

The Christianity of the United States shows distinctive features which are absent in Europe but are so prominent and apparent that they are noticeable even in Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholics of Europe are different from the native Roman Catholics in the United States; and it is probable in this age of rapid exchange of thought and mutual intercourse that American Christianity will considerably affect European Christianity.

The Christianity of the Armenians still preserves

many features which have long been abandoned by both European and American Christians.

The Christianity of the Saxon races, the North Germans, the Dutch, the English, and their kin, preserves the combative nature of their pagan ancestors. Luther is a character in whom the impulse that came down to him from the carpenter's son of Galilee is strangely combined with the war-spirit of Beowulf and the liberty-loving spirit of Arminius.

If we invented new words for every change that took place in an evolution of an idea, we should have to invent new words constantly, and our dictionaries would swell to an enormous size. Experience has taught us to preserve the identity of a name, even where radical changes have taken place, if only the historical connexion be preserved.

And there is a good reason for it! Ideas are not nonentities. They are not mere sounds. They are living impulses as much capable of growth, adaptation, and transformation as are plants and animals. They have been embodied in words which are preserved in books, and are exemplified in moral conduct which impresses and influences the growing generation. Ideas are spiritual organisms, and as such they are subject to the same laws of growth and change as all organisms.

As to the final destiny of religions, it is apparent that religions, by following the injunction of accepting the truth without compromise, whatever the truth may be, must ultimately come to one and the same conclusion. Every religious progress must be an approach towards the common ideal of all religions which will be a religion based upon the laws of existence traceable in the psychical, social, and physical facts of experience.

Rituals and symbols (nay, even names) may vary according to taste, historical tradition, and opinion; but the essence of religion can only be one and must remain one and the same among all nations, in all climes, and under all conditions. P. C.

"BUDDHIST MORALITY."

WE READ in the *New-Church Messenger* the following communication, a Christian's reply to an unjust accusation of Buddhist morality:

"EDITOR OF THE MESSENGER:—Under this heading the *Messenger* of October 16, 1895, prints the following article:

"Recent and more careful inquiry into the teachings of Buddhist books and the life in Buddhist Pansales, or monasteries, 'reveals much that seems very evil in the spiritual light of the Scriptures. It is said the Viniya Pitika was partly translated, but English publishers would not print it for fear of prosecution for disseminating obscene literature. Broad and liberal views are proper up to a certain extent, but they must not be spread out thin enough to whitewash one of the most iniquitous systems of belief in the world in spite of certain beautiful and highly moral passages, which, like pearls in a sewer, are found in its literature.'

"... When this 'recent and more careful inquiry' was made,

is to me a mystery, for I have read every recent work on the subject, and there is nothing in the character of the Buddhist populations from Japan to Ceylon to justify such cruel charges, for they are uniformly described by travellers as honest, chaste, truthful, gentle, generous, and temperate. That there are evils connected with the monastic system is doubtless true, and it may be that the informant of the writer was justified by something he may have seen in some Buddhist monastery, but Father Huc, who travelled more extensively than any one else ever has in Buddhist countries and spent much of his time in monasteries, found no such state of things.

"As to the Vinaya Pitika—there are a large number of books under this name, all purporting to give the life and teachings of Buddha, with illustrations and explanations, and all substantially agreeing as to the life and teachings, but differing widely in the explanations; but among them all there is but one book under this name that will justify the statements in this article, and that is one which the Dipavamsa, a connected history of Ceylon for twenty-three hundred years, says was the production of a heretical sect, which, as this history declares, 'proclaimed a doctrine against the faith' and 'comprised other sutras and another vinaya'; of which Professor Beale says: 'The sections illustrating the Paragika and other rules are of a gross and offensive character.' This with other facts convinced that distinguished scholar that this account of its origin was correct.

"It would be as just to quote the book of Mormon as giving the moral tendency of the teachings of Christianity as to quote this heretical production written many hundred years after the death of Buddha as showing the moral tendency of his teachings. But aside from all this, it is a practical denial of the paternal care of the Father of us all to claim that He has for twenty-five hundred years left the great majority of his common children to grope their way with no light to guide them but the fitful phosphorescence from a great moral sewer, and no faith to cheer them, but 'the most iniquitous system of belief in this world.'

"But what are some of the pearls in this moral sewer?

"First, the great doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man, which swept from all Buddhist countries both caste and slavery with all their attendant cruelties and horrors. Thus the commandments:

"Thou shalt not kill.

"Thou shalt not steal.

"Thou shalt not lie.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery.

"Thou shalt not taste any intoxicating drink."

"But to me more remarkable than all these rules of life to regulate the outward conduct is the fact that the most fundamental and constantly enforced of Buddha's teachings was that love is the only power to regenerate man. That we must overcome evil with good, and hatred by love, was not only taught and practiced by him, but was illustrated and enforced by some of the most beautiful discourses that ever fell from human lips.

"I will close this article by what I regard as another pearl in the teachings of Buddha which I give in my own language, and would especially commend to all New Churchmen as not only obedience to the great law of charity, but as teaching the highest possible, practical wisdom to those who are desirous for the spread of the heavenly doctrines.

"Revere your own, revile no brother's faith,
The light you see is from Nirvana's sun,
Whose rising splendors promise perfect day.
The feeble rays that light your brother's path
Are from the self-same sun, by falsehoods hid
The lingering shadows of the passing night.

HENRY T. NILES.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CAN THERE BE A NEW CHRISTIANITY?

To the Editor of The Open Court:

I wish to ask a few questions which have been suggested to me by your article in *The Open Court* of December 12, entitled "The Doctrine of Resurrection and Its Significance in the New Christianity." What is the definition of the word Christianity? One in authority defines it as "The religion of Christians; the system of doctrines and precepts taught by Christ." Now what I wish to know is: how can any one, consistently, use the term "New Christianity"? If the men who lived at the time of Christ, and those who were, a little later, taught by his Apostles, were not able to formulate a creed or record, accurately, what Jesus taught, is it consistent to suppose that after two thousand years men can do so? For surely there are no better intellects to-day than were possessed by the Anti-Nicene Fathers.

If one does not believe nor practice what is taught by the religion of the Christians, by what right can he consistently call himself a Christian?

If the light shed around by scientific research makes Christian views untenable, what right have thinkers to reconstruct their religion, throwing out what they choose, and keeping what they wish, and then call their belief the "New Christianity"? Why not reconstruct Mohammedanism by striking out its inconsistencies, and what we call its immoralities, and then call it the New Mohammedanism?

It would be composed of practically the same precepts and teachings as the New Christianity.

The quotation which you give of the close of Rev. Haweis's article would lead one to infer that the Christ ideal was a false one, and that helps to prove that the ideal was of human conception and therefore faulty. Would not the separation of the ideal Christ from the real Jesus be a better solution of the question?

Would any religion that had received a name on account of its distinctive features be able, "with all reverence towards the past," to "accept the truth without compromise, whatever the truth may be?"

Such a religion would be a different religion from that defined by the word Christianity, and would demand a new name if those holding it wished to be consistent. If you think I have any reason for asking these questions I would be pleased to receive answers.

RACINE, WIS.

MRS. GEO. H. HOPPER.

THE OPEN COURT.

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